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## The Lobbyist No. 19 (August 1997)

Maine Women's Lobby Staff

*Maine Women's Lobby*

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## WHO ME? RUN FOR OFFICE?

*Yes, You! For the State Legislature!*

It is no surprise that fewer women than men run for elective office in Maine and in the nation. But women possess valuable insights, problem-solving skills, and values that are needed in the formulation of public policy.

You probably have thought of a few things you would like to see changed. Well, maybe its time to put those thoughts to work and carve a name for yourself at the State House. Running for and holding office is a significant and rewarding challenge. If you would like to speak out on issues of importance to your community, organize broad coalitions of people, advocate for those who don't have a voice, argue passionately for issues you care about, and hammer out compromises that work for everyone, this may be the perfect job for you.

The Lobby encourages you to consider running for office. Often, running for a vacant seat is an easier way to get started than running against an incumbent. The following seats will be open in the 1998 elections due to term limits on the incumbents:

### Representatives Term Limited in 1998

Name	Party	District	Town/Cities
Barth, Alvin	R	65	Andover, Bethel, Rangeley, etc.
Carleton, Joseph	R	7	Ogunquit, Wells
Dexter, Edward	R	66	Jackman, Kingfield, etc.
Donnelly, James	R	145	Presque Isle
Kerr, George	D	20	Old Orchard Beach
Kontos, Carol	D	39	Windham
Lemke, William	D	29	Westbrook
Mitchell, Elizabeth	D	94	Augusta, Vassalboro
Ott, David	R	2	York
Paul, Norman	D	9	Sanford
Poulin, Thomas	D	103	Oakland, Sidney
Spear, Robert	R	59	Waldoboro, Nobleboro
Vigue, Marc	D	102	Winslow

### Senators Term Limited in 1998

Name	Party	District	County
Cleveland, John	D	22	Androscoggin

*Continued on Page 2*

a publication of the

## MAINE WOMEN'S LOBBY

### SEXUALITY EDUCATION THREATENED

*Maine applies for federal abstinence funds*

The Maine Women's Lobby has always supported comprehensive sexuality education for young people. According to research from the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy and the Alan Guttmacher Institute, comprehensive programs which include life skills, sexuality education and abstinence, are the most effective in delaying the onset of intercourse or increasing the use of contraception.

The State of Maine has promoted this approach since 1979 and the teen pregnancy rate has dropped dramatically since 1980. Currently there is an effort to reverse our state's commitment to comprehensive sexuality education by accepting "Abstinence only" money from the federal government. As part of the welfare "reform" bill that was passed by Congress last year, \$250 million was made available to the states over a 5 year period for abstinence-only education. (see language of the law on page 2). States must match every four federal dollars they receive with three dollars from other sources. Maine has applied for the abstinence-only funds.

While we are relieved by Governor King's decision to restrict the use of this money to a media campaign for the first year, we are still concerned about the use of the money in years 2-5. We will be carefully monitoring the process and urge you to watch this issue closely. If you have any concerns about the use of this money you can contact the Governor at #1 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333.

*See page 2 for language of the law*

## MAINE WOMEN NEEDED IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF PUBLIC POLICY

*MWL encourages members to serve on state-appointed commissions, boards and task forces*

Women in Maine have achieved great political progress this year! Nationally and locally, women were elected and appointed to important public positions. Nevertheless, women remain in the minority in all aspects of political life. Now, more than ever, we need women's voices to be heard. Public policy decisions -- on welfare reform, the environment, health care, reproductive rights, and civil rights -- will disproportionately impact women. Yet, too often women's "real life" insights are absent or discounted in discussions about public life.

*Continued on Page 2*



## (ABSTINENCE - FROM PAGE 1)

*"A Separate Program for Abstinence Education" means an educational or motivational program which . . .*

- has as its exclusive purpose, teaching the social, psychological, and health gains to be realized by abstaining from sexual activity ;
- teaches abstinence from sexual activity outside marriage as the expected standard for all school/age children;
- teaches that a mutually faithful monogamous relationship and that context of marriage is the expected standard for human sexual activity;
- teaches that sexual activity outside of the context of marriage is likely to have harmful psychological and physical effects;
- teaches that bearing children out of wedlock is likely to have harmful psychological and physical effects;
- teaches young people how to reject sexual advances and how alcohol and drug use increases vulnerability to sexual advances;
- teaches the importance of attaining self sufficiency before engaging in sexual activity.

*According to Section 510 [42 U.S.C. 710] of the Social Security Act*

## NEW MEMBERSHIP POLICY

MWL has instituted a new membership retention policy in an effort to streamline our operations and provide members with more opportunities to contribute to our work. We need to generate increased revenue because our costs have gone up as our capacity and programs have expanded. We hope this new policy will help us utilize our resources more effectively.

You may be accustomed to receiving a renewal notice in a certain month of the year, with additional notices to follow if we do not hear back from you. Now, we will be sending appeals to all of our members three times during the year. This will allow us to mail at bulk rates and consolidate our efforts. We hope that you will give as generously as you are able each time. We request that you contribute at least \$35 over the course of the year. MWL is committed to serving all women and a contribution of any amount entitles you to membership.

## (WHO ME? - FROM PAGE 1)

If you are interested in learning more about running for office, consider attending the National Organization for Women (NOW) Annual State Conference, Saturday, October 18 (1997). They will be offering a workshop on running for elective office. Or call, the Lobby for encouragement. See you at the State House.

## (MAINE WOMEN NEEDED- FROM PAGE 1)

The Maine Women's Lobby works hard to bring a feminist analysis and emphasis on women's issues to the political arena. As part of our mission we endeavor to bring the diversity of women's voices to the table. Most often, we work to involve women in the legislative process by encouraging them to vote, communicate with their legislators about issues, and run for public office. But one area of the political process which often goes unnoticed and where women can make significant impact is by serving on state commissions, boards, and task forces.

Commissions, boards, and task forces oversee or research particular aspects of public life. Commissions advise the governor on policy issues, recommend legislative action, and prepare reports on topics of concern to Maine citizens (such as the Commission to Study Poverty Among Working Parents). Advisory boards oversee professional organizations (such as the Board of Education) or track ongoing public concerns (such as the Maine Disabilities Council). Task forces develop proposals on how to implement a program or tackle an issue (such as the Task Force on Improving Access to Prescription Drugs for the Elderly).

The work done by these committees is critical to the development and implementation of public policy. Members of committees are appointed and reflect a diversity of backgrounds, expertise, and viewpoints. It is usually not difficult to get appointed; a demonstrated interest in the issues and a commitment to the work is often sufficient. We hope that you will consider serving on a committee. If you are interested in learning more, please give us a call at 622-0851 or call Frances Frost (Governor's office) at 287-3531.





## **WE NEED YOU TO RATIFY PROPOSED BY-LAW REVISIONS**

### **To All Members:**

Recognizing the need to up-date the Lobby By-Laws (last revised in 1987), members of the Board reviewed and approved By-Law revisions on May 5, 1997. In accordance with the requirements for amendment (Article VI) they are presented here for the approval of all Lobby members. The primary objectives were:

1. To make the process of nominating and electing Board members conform to recent past practice, while retaining the original provision allowing members to present their own names as Board candidates.
2. To Provide Board member indemnification against financial claims made on the organization.
3. To adjust Board terms to provide for 1/3 membership turnover each year, thus ensuring continuity and experience.

In the process, several additional provisions were added that seemed prudent and useful, such as term limits and specific authorization for the appointment of committees.

All new material is underlined. Please review these amended By-Laws and, if you approve their adoption, fill in and send us the attached form. If you have questions, call Lillian Pease (737-8089).

Chair or his/her designee shall preside at Board meetings.

### **ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP**

Any person who subscribes to the purpose of the Maine Women's Lobby, upon payment of dues, shall be enrolled as a member for a period of twelve months from such payment, or for such a longer period as the Board may determine. A general membership meeting shall be held annually.

The Board of Directors may, by written vote of 2/3 of its actual membership, suspend or remove from membership in the Maine Women's lobby any member, if the Board determines after notice and opportunity for hearing that the member has publicly represented her/himself as a representative of the Maine Women's Lobby in a manner that was unauthorized and contrary to the purpose of the Maine Women's Lobby and injurious to the organization.

### **ARTICLE IV - BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

#### **Section 1. - Composition**

The Board of the Maine Women's Lobby shall consist of no more than 21 and no fewer than 18 members. Seven (7) Directors shall be elected each year for a three-year term at the annual meeting of the Corporation.

#### **Section 2. - Duties**

The Board shall manage the affairs and control the funds and property of the Corporation; shall appoint an Executive Director who shall be responsible for the execution of Board policies on a daily basis and will be directly responsible to the Board of Directors; shall determine legislative priorities; shall make regular reports to the membership. The Board shall

#### **Section 3. - Nomination and Election**

The Nominating Committee shall develop a list of members for nomination to 3-year term on the Board of Directors, to be presented to the membership at the annual meeting. In addition, any member of the Maine Women's Lobby may nominate her/himself to a position on the Board. Notification of the nomination process shall be mailed to all members with the annual meeting notice.

All nominees shall be presented to the annual meeting. If the number does not exceed seven (7) the secretary may be asked to cast one ballot for the slate. When the number of nominations exceed seven (7) in number, the vote shall be by written ballot. Election shall be by a plurality of votes of members present. In the case of a tie for the last seat (s), the winner(s) shall be determined by lot.

#### **Section 4. - Officers**

The Officers shall be Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer, to be elected at the annual meeting from a slate presented by the Nominating Committee following the election of new Board members.

#### **Section 5. - Vacancies**

Vacancies on the Board or among its officers shall be filled by majority vote of the remaining Board members present at a Board meeting called for that purpose. In the event of a vacancy in the Chair, the Vice-Chair shall assume the duties of the Chair pending the election of a new Chair. Persons appointed to fill vacancies shall serve for the unexpired term of that seat.



#### Section 6. - Term Limits

Membership on the Board shall be limited to two consecutive full terms (6 years). Members leaving the Board at the end of two terms may be considered for re-election to the Board provided that the new term begins no less than two (2) years after the end of the previous terms.

#### Section 7. - Participation

Members of the Board shall notify the Chair if they are unable to attend a Board meeting. Any member who is absent for three successive meetings without prior notification to the Chair or who is absent for more than one-half of the regularly scheduled meetings during a year, without prior approval of the Board, will be deemed to have vacated his/her position.

#### Section 8. - Committees

Executive Committee: The Executive Committee is composed of Officers elected at the Annual Meeting and the Executive Director ex officio.

The Executive Committee may hold meetings as called by the Chair in the interim of regular Board meetings to make decisions and take actions as needed. Decisions made by the Executive Committee shall be presented to the Board at its next regular meeting for ratification.

Nominating Committee: The Chair shall appoint a Board member as the Chair of a Nominating Committee which shall consist of at least two (2) additional members, who need not also be members of the Board. This Committee shall prepare a slate of nominees for Board membership to be presented at the annual meeting. (See III.3, above)

Other Committees: The Chair, with approval of the Board will appoint the members and Chair of Standing Committees and any ad hoc committees as may be needed for the operations of the organization. Members of Committees need not be members of the Board of Directors. However, any policies and procedures developed by these committees will be subject to approval by the Board of Directors.

#### Section 9. - Indemnification

The Directors, officers and agents of the Corporation shall not be personally liable for any debt, liability or obligation of the Corporation. All persons, Corporations or other entities extending credit to, contracting with, or having any claim against the

Corporation shall look only to the funds and property of the Corporation for the payment of any such contract or claim, or for the payment of any debt, damages, judgment or decree or of any money that may otherwise become due or payable to them from the Corporation.

### ARTICLE V - FINANCES

#### Section 1. - Fiscal Year

The fiscal year shall begin on July 1, end on June 31.

#### Section 2. - Dues

Membership dues shall be set by a two-thirds vote of the Board of Directors for membership periods of one year, or such longer periods as the Board may determine.

### ARTICLE VI - AMENDMENTS

The Maine Women's Lobby Board, or the membership by written petition of 10% of its actual membership, may initiate a mail ballot for the purpose of amending these By-Laws. Such amendments must be ratified by two-thirds vote of returned mail ballots.

### ARTICLE VII - PROCEDURE

Except as herein provided, all proceedings of the Maine Women's Lobby shall be governed by Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised.

### ARTICLE VIII - DISSOLUTION

The Corporation may be dissolved by approval of two-thirds of the returned mail ballots in a referendum of the membership initiated for that purpose by two-thirds vote of the Board of Directors. Upon dissolution, the Maine Women's Lobby board shall, after paying or making provision for payment of all liabilities of the Corporation, dispose of all assets exclusively for the purpose of the Corporation in such a manner or to such organization(s) as shall at the time qualify as devoted to the purpose of the Maine Women's Lobby.



# WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE (WDI) NEWS

## GIRLS' DAY AT THE STATE HOUSE

April 30, 1997 was not a day of business-as-usual at the Maine State House. Eighty girls from around the state converged on the State House for a day-long experience in civic affairs sponsored by the Women's Development Institute. From Presque Isle to Biddeford, teen girls came to learn about not only the role of government in their lives, but also the range of opportunities for them to play in government and public life.

The girls participated in a variety of activities, from meeting with department commissioners to discuss their concerns, to participating in mock public hearings and arguing for or against a proposed bill.

Forty legislators were also involved in the day; some of

them met with the girls to discuss the political process, while others offered to be "shadowed" by girls while they went about their duties.

The usuals at the State House agreed that the day lent an air of vitality to the hallowed halls. The girls gave a thumbs-up, saying that the day had provided them with insights and encouragement as they develop their aspirations for the future.

This was WDI's first Girls' Day at the State House; we hope to make it an annual event and to expand upon its success by developing additional training days for other groups of women and girls. Thanks to all the volunteers who made it happen!

## NEW PROJECT ANNOUNCED BY WDI

WDI is excited to announce the inception of a new project, the Women's Leadership and Economic Advocacy Project (WLEAP), a joint endeavor with Maine Equal Justice Partners. WLEAP is the next step in our ongoing effort to address the needs of low-income women. Maine Equal Justice Partners (MEJP) works to provide representation for low income people in the legislature as well as before the courts and administrative agencies.

Based on our past work with the Women's Economic Security Project and the data it provided, WDI and MEJP have been able to articulate to the public and policy makers the key issues and obstacles low-income women face moving from poverty into economic security. And thanks to the work of the Maine Women's Lobby and other advocacy groups, Maine has a good chance at implementing effective programs to address some of these basic poverty issues. However, more low-income women need to become involved in the process

for these opportunities to be realized.

We hope to encourage more low-income women to become effective advocates and spokeswomen on poverty issues both at the local and statewide level through WLEAP. WLEAP is an outreach and education project designed to help low income women develop their leadership skills. We will work with 32-40 women this fall to identify the issues women wish to work on; provide background information and education on the economic and social roots of poverty; develop strategies for effecting change; develop relationships and coalitions with other like-minded people/organizations; provide leadership and public speaking training; and offer a day-long hands-on civics experience at the Maine State House.

WDI is currently working to raise funds for this project - if you would like to help, call us at 622-0851.

*Start your morning off with a bang!*

## WOMEN IN STATE LEADERSHIP TO SPEAK AT ANNUAL BREAKFAST

The annual MWL Breakfast of Champions is slated for **Wednesday, September 24 from 7:30- 9:00 a.m. at the Holiday Inn By The Bay in Portland.** Join us for a morning of celebration of recent Lobby accomplishments and an entertaining and thought-provoking review of Maine politics by five noted elected officials.

An unprecedented half of the Legislature's ten leadership positions are currently held by women. They are Senate Minority Leader Jane Amero, House Majority Leader Carol Kontos, House Speaker Libby Mitchell, Senate Majority Leader Chellie Pingree, and Assistant Senate Majority Leader Anne Rand. The Lobby has invited them to join us to provide you with an insider's glimpse of the goings-on at the State House, the upcoming issues, and the challenges they face as they do their jobs.

We hope you will join us. The cost is \$20/person. If you would like to purchase a table (8 people) for you and your friends, company or organization, the cost is \$150. Reservations may be made by sending the full purchase price with your name and address, and the names/addresses of any additional guests, to the Maine Women's Lobby, PO Box 15, Hallowell, ME 04347.



# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE:

If you would like to learn more about any of these bills, we encourage you to attend one of our “house parties” scheduled for the fall. Call the office (622-0851) for a house party near you.

Generally, bills passed and signed by the Governor take effect 90 days after they are signed. Exceptions are emergency bills which take effect immediately.

## FAMILY PLANNING AND REPRODUCTIVE CHOICE

All anti-choice bills were defeated. However, much time, energy and resources were expended to make that happen. The struggle to preserve reproductive rights for women is far from over.

### ALL DEFEATED

*Bills sponsored by Rep. Ahearne (D-Madawaska):*

**L.D. 4    *An Act to Preserve the Life of Viable Fetuses.***

**L.D. 57    *An Act to Strengthen the Laws Governing the Failure to Preserve the Life of a Live-born Person.***

**L.D. 441    *An Act to Prohibit Family Planning Agencies from Using State Funds for Certain Expenses Related to Abortion Services***

**L.D. 661    *An Act to Require a 24-Hour Waiting Period before an Abortion May Be Performed.***

**L.D. 662    *An Act to Require Parental Notification for Minors Seeking Abortions.***

*Bills sponsored by Rep. Mack (R-Standish):*

**L.D. 122    *An Act to Repeal the Funding for the Family Planning Association of Maine.***

**L.D. 1403    *An Act to Require Parental Consent for Contraceptives.***

**L.D. 535    *An Act to Ban Partial Birth Abortions.*** Sponsor: Rep. Ahearne (D-Madawaska). Modeled on the federal bill that was vetoed by Pres. Clinton. Would have banned a particular abortion procedure and made performing the procedure a Class C crime unless necessary to save the life of the mother and no other procedure would suffice (there was no exception for the health of the woman). In addition, physician performing the abortion would be subject to damages in a civil suit. The most hotly debated of all of the anti-choice bills. Passed in the House and was defeated in the Senate and died between the Houses.

## ECONOMIC SECURITY

Most of the **Recommendations from the Commission to Study Poverty Among Working Parents (RCSPAWP)** were implemented either as bills or the concepts were incorporated into other bills. The AFDC program (Aid to Families with Dependent Children) has been replaced with the TANF program (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families).

**P.L. 1997, Ch.530: *An Act Regarding Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and Welfare Reform (Emergency).*** Replaces the AFDC program. Key components: Creation of a Parents As Scholars (P.A.S.) program and an 8 county demonstration project to “make work pay”. Demonstration project covers York, Knox, Waldo, Lincoln, Kennebec, Sagadahoc, Penobscot and Piscataquis counties. TANF parents living in those counties now able to have more of their earnings “disregarded”. (\$150 plus 50% of the remaining earnings) in figuring their cash grant. Participants in demonstration project will not have 5 year clock run while enrolled in demonstration. Parents As Scholars (P.A.S.)—A separate state-funded program providing 2 and 4 year post-secondary education opportunities for 2,000 participants. Participants receive same support services (child care and transportation) that they would currently receive in ASPIRE, will receive same cash benefit that TANF recipients receive, and will not be subject to 5 year limit while enrolled. All TANF applicants will be informed that they may request a determination of good cause not to cooperate in collecting child support or not to participate in ASPIRE activities due to a domestic violence situation. (For a complete summary of the new TANF program contact the **Maine Equal Justice Project at: 626-7058**)

**Chapter 43: *Resolve, Directing the Commissioner of Labor to Implement the RCSPAWP with Regard to Pay Discrimination Based on Gender.*** Sponsor: Rep. Povich (D-Ellsworth). Directs Commissioner of Labor to adopt rules to implement the provisions of the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 26, section 628 prohibiting discrimination in pay on the basis of gender. Commissioner shall forward the final rules to the Labor Committee no later than March 1, 1998.

**Chapter 23: *Resolve, to Implement the RCSPAWP with Regard to Microenterprise Needs.*** Sponsor: Rep. Povich (D-Ellsworth). Requires Department of Economic and Community Development to report to the Legislature’s joint standing committee having jurisdiction over business and economic development matters on the needs of entrepreneurship in the State.

**Chapter 65: *Resolve, to Establish the Commission to Study the Unemployment Compensation System (Emergency).*** Establishes an 11 person commission and directs it to study the unemployment compensation program to assess whether it is meeting the changing needs of the labor force and business community. Issues include: seasonality exclusion, disqualification of persons who lose work because of problems with child care or transportation, timeliness of the extended benefit trigger and the solvency of the unemployment compensation fund. Commission shall report back to the Labor Committee by Jan.1,1998.

**Chapter 36: *Resolve, to Implement the RCSPAWP with Regard to an Annual Report Card on Poverty.*** Sponsor: Rep. Povich (D-Ellsworth). Requires State Planning Office to report annually to the Legislature, beginning on Jan.1,1998, on the subject of poverty in the State, including poverty among children and adults, regional differences, conditions responsible for changes from the prior year, expectations for the coming year and the economic condition of the State’s communities.

**L.D. 564: *An Act to Implement the RCSPAWP with Regard to State Earned Income Tax Credit.*** Sponsor: Rep. Povich (D-Ellsworth). (Bill defeated—however, the concept of a state earned income tax credit will be explored by the Taxation Committee next session.)

**L.D. 840: *An Act to Have State Wage Laws Conform with the Federal Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996.*** Sponsor: Rep. Carleton (R-Wells). On Oct.1,1996 “tipped employees” saw their hourly wage increase from \$2.13/hr to \$2.38/hr. The second phase of their wage increase to \$2.58/hr. is scheduled to take effect Sept. 1, 1997. Bill would have reduced their wage back to \$2.13/hr. and frozen it at that level. (Defeated)

**P.L.1997 Ch.433: *An Act to Provide Court-ordered Income Withholding of Spousal Support.*** Sponsor: E. Townsend (D-Portland). States that spousal support orders issued or modified by Maine courts must have a provision for the withholding of income should arrearages of spousal support occur.

## VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN

**L.D. 90    *Resolve, to Require the Department of Education to Study and Make Recommendations to Alleviate Sexual Harassment in Schools.*** Sponsor: Rep. Povich (D-Ellsworth). Would have required Department of Education to study problem of sexual harassment in Maine schools and report its findings to Governor and Legislature. (Bill defeated—however, Dept. of Education has agreed to conduct study without legislative mandate.)

**Chapter 19: *Resolve, to Encourage Public Schools to Adopt a Conflict Resolution Model.*** Sponsor: Rep. Winglass (R- Auburn). Authorizes Dept. of Education to support appropriate conflict resolution education and professional development opportunities for public school teachers, administrators and students. Also directs Dept. to conduct a survey to determine types of conflict resolution models currently used in State. Commissioner of Education shall report findings of survey to Education Committee by Jan. 30, 1998.

**P.L.1997, Ch.333: *An Act to Ensure Proper Training for Conducting Forensic Examinations for Victims of Sexual Assault (Emergency).*** Sponsor: Rep. Lindahl (R- Northport). Expands pool of trained health care professionals by allowing nurses to conduct physical examinations and collect forensic evidence for victims of sexual assault. Modeled on a successful Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner program in Oklahoma, which resulted in increased convictions of perpetrators and reduced trauma for victims of sexual assault.

**P.L. 1997, Ch.507: *An Act to Protect Victims of Domestic Violence.*** Sponsor: Rep. M. Saxl (D-Portland). Establishes Domestic Abuse Homicide Review Panel to review the deaths of people killed as a result of domestic violence. Panel shall recommend to state and local agencies ways of improving system for protecting people from domestic abuse. Also requires a person under the age of 18 to obtain written consent from a judge of probate court before they can receive a marriage license.

## HEALTH CARE

**P.L. 1997, Ch. 340: *An Act to Decrease Infectious Disease Transmission.*** Sponsor: Rep. Mitchell (D-Portland). Removes criminal penalties for furnishing or possession of 10 or fewer hypodermic apparatuses and for furnishing any number of hypodermic apparatuses as a component of a Bureau of Health-certified needle exchange program to reduce transmission of HIV, Hepatitis C and other infectious diseases.

*Continued on page 4*



## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

**P.L. 1997, Ch. 515: *An Act to Expand the Family Medical Leave Laws.*** Sponsor: Sen. Cathcart (D-Penobscot). Expands coverage of the family medical leave laws by reducing threshold for covered employees from work sites with 25 employees to sites with 15 employees.

**P.L. 1997, Ch. 560: *An Act to Discourage Smoking, Provide Tax Relief and Improve the Health of Maine Citizens.*** The "tobacco tax compromise" supported in the closing hours of session. Establishes a Tobacco Tax Relief Fund and a Health Care Fund for Maine Citizens. Creates the Maine Commission on Children's Health Care (MCCHC) and a Task Force on Improving Access to Prescription Drugs for the Elderly. Money from the .37 tax increase on tobacco is placed in the Tobacco Tax Relief Fund beginning Nov. 1, 1997. A small amount of money from this fund will be used for a Tobacco Prevention and Control Program. In January 1998, the Taxation Committee will determine how bulk of additional revenue will be used. MCCHC will have 16 members and shall submit recommendations, including legislation, to Governor and Legislature by Dec. 15, 1997.

### ANTI-DISCRIMINATION

**P.L. 1997, Ch. 205: *An Act to Prevent Discrimination.*** Sponsor: Sen. Abromson (R-Cumberland). Prohibits discrimination in areas of housing, credit, employment and public accommodation on basis of sexual orientation. Religious corporations, associations or organizations are exempt from provision. (The Christian Civic League and the Maine chapter of the Christian Coalition are mounting a "people's veto" petition drive to keep the law from taking effect.)

## WDI AWARDED FUNDS FROM MAINE WOMEN'S FUND

The Maine Women's Fund (MWF) awarded WDI a grant of \$6,000 in general operating support "in recognition of [WDI's] leadership in meeting the needs of women and girls in Maine through research and public information programs," according to MWF Executive Director Karin Anderson.

Thank you, MWF!

## GREAT ESCAPES RAFFLE A SUCCESS

Friday, June 13, was a lucky day for the six Lobby supporters who purchased the winning tickets in our annual "Great Escapes" raffle. Congratulations to winners Alice Pratt, Judy Micolea, Janis Bork, Elaina Foley, Jane Gilbert, Diane Alexander and Gloria and Joseph Melnick.

We thank our volunteers and the generous business people who contributed prizes. The raffle raised nearly \$3,000 for MWL activities this year. Your support is what keeps us going.

## WANTED: ENERGETIC, VISIONARY, GO-GETTERS

Maine Women's Lobby Board seeking new Board members

The Board of Directors has openings for new members. The rewards are fabulous: promoting one of the leading women's organizations in the state; working with a fun and committed group of women; developing useful organizing skills; putting your unique talents to work.

Over the next few years, the board will be focusing on the financial growth and stability of the organization as well as programmatic expansion.

Board members are elected to three-year terms and are expected to serve on at least one committee: CORE (Committee on Research and Education, which oversees WDI), Fundraising, Membership, or Legislative. Attendance at the monthly meetings (usually the first Wednesday) in Augusta, as well as other MWL functions, is required.

Individuals willing to make a commitment to the continued success and vitality of the Lobby are encouraged to apply. If you are interested in becoming a member of the Board, contact Board member Elizabeth Sheehan (W 772-5356; H 773-4806) with any questions and send a brief letter of intent and your resume to the office by **August 27** for election at the Annual Meeting October 1.

## MWL ANNUAL MEETING

The MWL Annual Meeting will be held October 1, 1997 from 6:30-8:30. All members are encouraged to attend. We will elect new board members; bid fond farewells to outgoing board members; provide an overview of MWL's missions and projects; and open the floor for a discussion of the future of the Lobby. We hope you will join us. Please RSVP for location by September 29 if you plan to attend.

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

MWL & WDI are seeking dedicated volunteers to help us with three specific projects:

**Photography.** We need someone handy with a camera to document MWL & WDI functions ie Breakfast of Champions, Girls Day at the State House

**Data Entry.** We need volunteers willing to come in on a project basis to enter information into our database.

**Videography.** We hope to produce a video documenting MWL women and achievements to commemorate our upcoming 20th anniversary.

If you would like to help, please contact us at the office (622-0851)



# WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE (WDI) NEWS

## GIRLS' DAY AT THE STATE HOUSE

April 30, 1997 was not a day of business-as-usual at the Maine State House. Eighty girls from around the state converged on the State House for a day-long experience in civic affairs sponsored by the Women's Development Institute. From Presque Isle to Biddeford, teen girls came to learn about not only the role of government in their lives, but also the range of opportunities for them to play in government and public life.

The girls participated in a variety of activities, from meeting with department commissioners to discuss their concerns, to participating in mock public hearings and arguing for or against a proposed bill.

Forty legislators were also involved in the day; some of

them met with the girls to discuss the political process, while others offered to be "shadowed" by girls while they went about their duties.

The usuals at the State House agreed that the day lent an air of vitality to the hallowed halls. The girls gave a thumbs-up, saying that the day had provided them with insights and encouragement as they develop their aspirations for the future.

This was WDI's first Girls' Day at the State House; we hope to make it an annual event and to expand upon its success by developing additional training days for other groups of women and girls. Thanks to all the volunteers who made it happen!

## NEW PROJECT ANNOUNCED BY WDI

WDI is excited to announce the inception of a new project, the **Women's Leadership and Economic Advocacy Project (WLEAP)**, a joint endeavor with Maine Equal Justice Partners. WLEAP is the next step in our ongoing effort to address the needs of low-income women. Maine Equal Justice Partners (MEJP) works to provide representation for low income people in the legislature as well as before the courts and administrative agencies.

Based on our past work with the Women's Economic Security Project and the data it provided, WDI and MEJP have been able to articulate to the public and policy makers the key issues and obstacles low-income women face moving from poverty into economic security. And thanks to the work of the Maine Women's Lobby and other advocacy groups, Maine has a good chance at implementing effective programs to address some of these basic poverty issues. However, more low-income women need to become involved in the process

for these opportunities to be realized.

We hope to encourage more low-income women to become effective advocates and spokeswomen on poverty issues both at the local and statewide level through WLEAP. WLEAP is an outreach and education project designed to help low income women develop their leadership skills. We will work with 32-40 women this fall to identify the issues women wish to work on; provide background information and education on the economic and social roots of poverty; develop strategies for effecting change; develop relationships and coalitions with other like-minded people/organizations; provide leadership and public speaking training; and offer a day-long hands-on civics experience at the Maine State House.

WDI is currently working to raise funds for this project - if you would like to help, call us at 622-0851.

*Start your morning off with a bang!*

## WOMEN IN STATE LEADERSHIP TO SPEAK AT ANNUAL BREAKFAST

The annual MWL Breakfast of Champions is slated for **Wednesday, September 24 from 7:30- 9:00 a.m. at the Holiday Inn By The Bay in Portland.** Join us for a morning of celebration of recent Lobby accomplishments and an entertaining and thought-provoking review of Maine politics by five noted elected officials.

An unprecedented half of the Legislature's ten leadership positions are currently held by women. They are Senate Minority Leader Jane Amero, House Majority Leader Carol Kontos, House Speaker Libby Mitchell, Senate Majority Leader Chellie Pingree, and Assistant Senate Majority Leader Anne Rand. The Lobby has invited them to join us to provide you with an insider's glimpse of the goings-on at the State House, the upcoming issues, and the challenges they face as they do their jobs.

We hope you will join us. The cost is \$20/person. If you would like to purchase a table (8 people) for you and your friends, company or organization, the cost is \$150. Reservations may be made by sending the full purchase price with your name and address, and the names/addresses of any additional guests, to the Maine Women's Lobby, PO Box 15, Hallowell, ME 04347.



## "THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN MAINE" FOR SALE!

"The Status of Women in Maine" Report, published by the Institute for Women's Policy Research in Washington, DC, and co-sponsored by WDI, provides statistical information on Maine women in politics, the economy, health and demographics and compares Maine women's status with the nation as a whole. The report is on sale for \$10 per copy. Send us your check, with name and address to WDI, P.O. Box 85, Hallowell, ME 04347

## FREE MAINE BREAST CANCER RESOURCE GUIDE

This guide could save your life! The Maine Breast Cancer Resource Guide, which was researched, edited and published by the Maine Breast Cancer Coalition, is available free of charge by writing to:  
Maine Breast Cancer Resource Guide  
c/o Maine Breast Cancer Coalition  
RR #2, Box 6820  
East Holden, ME 04429  
1-800-928-2644

## DATES TO REMEMBER:

**September 24, 1997:** The annual MWL Breakfast of Champions  
7:30 - 9:00 a.m., Holiday Inn By The Bay, Portland

**October 1, 1997:** Maine Women's Lobby Annual Meeting

**October 18, 1997:** Maine NOW Annual State Conference  
University of Southern Maine, Portland

Luncheon keynote: Nancy Grape; Plenary session: Karen Geraghty  
for more info, contact Rachel: 737-2329 or Kim: 871-9786

**October 20, 1997:** ME Women's Fund Annual Meeting  
Evening to Honor Maine Women, Holiday Inn by the Bay, Portland

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public policy development and legislative action."*